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SUBJECT: Jordan's TRIDE Participation Moving Slowly

11. Summary: Jordanian Ministry of Planning (MOP) Secretary General Maher Madadha told Econcouns and ESTHoff on August 31 that responsibility for the US/Israel/Jordan Trilateral Industrial Research and Development Fund (TRIDE) within the GoJ will eventually move from MOP to the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT). The combination of political sensitivity to engagement with Israel and financial pressures within the GoJ means Jordan's TRIDE participation will continue to move slowly. End summary.

#### Cabinet Needs to Assign TRIDE to Trade Ministry

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12. S/G Madadha said that the Cabinet needed to designate officially the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT) as the Jordanian lead on TRIDE since industrial R&D was MOIT's bailiwick. A motion to transfer TRIDE to MOIT was on the Cabinet's August 30 agenda (the night prior to our meeting at MOP). At the time of our meeting at the MOP, Madadha didn't know if the Cabinet had approved the decision or not.

#### Trade Ministry Then to Request Money Transfer

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13. Once MOIT has officially been given the lead on TRIDE, S/G Madadha said, MOIT should send a letter to MOP requesting that the latter transfer Jordan's \$330,000 contribution to TRIDE, first promised in Fall 2004. Madadha said in response to a question from Econcouns that the money has been committed, and that MOP has the information it needs to execute the actual transfer of funds. Madadha left the impression that there are no financial obstacles to making the contribution, and that once the internal bureaucratic arrangements were set, the transfer could take place quickly.

#### Planning Ministry Wants Economic Viability

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14. S/G Madadha said TRIDE needs to be economically viable, and more than a political gesture for peace. He also asked for stronger reporting on TRIDE, saying that the GOJ needs solid documentation of TRIDE success stories and its benefits to Jordan. With that information, he said, the GOJ can generate interest in TRIDE in the business community and defend TRIDE politically. He said that this reporting had not been provided in the past.

#### TRIDE Director Says Engagement, not Cash, is Priority

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15. In a phone conversation with ESTHoff following the MOP meeting, TRIDE (and U.S.-Israel Binational Industrial R&D Fund - BIRD) Director Dov Hershberg commented that getting Jordan to engage with Israel and the United States through the TRIDE Executive Committee is even more important than the cash. Responding indirectly to S/G Madadha's criticism of TRIDE reporting, Hershberg said that TRIDE reports had been directed to the Royal Scientific Society, the GOJ's TRIDE liaison agency at the time. He added that at S/G Madadha's urging two weeks earlier, he had called MOIT S/G

Oklah to discuss TRIDE. Hershberg said Oklah was impatient to get the official clearance to engage on TRIDE.

¶6. Comment: Political sensitivity to engagement with Israel and financial pressures within the GoJ mean it could be several more months before the GOJ moves ahead with its TRIDE participation.

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